Coldingham
1895

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Sanitary Report
of the
Parish of Coldingham,
For the Year 1895.

Gentlemen,

This fifth Report which I have the honour to submit to you - in consequence of the paucity of Medical topics - must necessarily be a poor and uninteresting one, Empty barns are characteristic of a year of dearth, while bald Sanitary Reports indicate a very satisfactory state of the Public health, It is hard to make bricks without straw but your Medical Officer is compelled to face such a task, for he holds his appointment on the distinct understanding that an Annual Report be presented, and whatever duty is left undischarged, at the stated period the Report must be forthcoming, even although the community persist in continuing throughout the year in a phenominally healthy condition,

The year 1895 has been distinguished for this parish at least by an almost entire absence of Zymotic diseases, and exceptionally few affections due to climatic or seasonal influences, and these being the materials out of which Sanitary Reports are mainly manufactured it cannot but be that the record this year must be a low one.

Whether in consequence of this particularly healthy condition of the Parish or a mere coincidence building operations have been prosecuted with great activity, Several new houses having been added to the district during the year at Coldingham

Coldingham and Reston, and a number of tumble down houses have been repaired, which has added much to the amenity of both villages. Coldingham and St. Abbs are increasing in popularity as health resorts, and the largely increased influx of visitors during this Summer must have improved the material welfare of a large number of householders if not of the community at large.

Although there has been a natural increase of population by the excess of births to deaths I have assumed the population to be the same at the end of 1895 as it was at the time of last Census viz: 3016. having reckoned the natural increase as counterbalanced by the decrease of the population on account of change of residence and emigration.

The number of deaths in this Parish during the year have been 36.- 18 Males and 18 Females, which is an increase of 7 over that of last year, and equal to a death rate per thousand of 11·93,- 6 of these deaths were children under 5 years of age, and 30 above that age, equal to a death rate per thousand of population under 5 years of age of 1·99, and above 5 years of 9·94.

The total births were 81, 42 being Males and 39 Females equal to a birth rate per thousand of 26·85. The number of births have been 20 in excess of last year and the male births as is generally the case most numerous in the proportion of 107 to

to 100, The total deaths have also been more numerous than the previous year and the females have been equal to the males which is a reversal of the usual proportion, Of the infantile deaths two were due to prematurity, three to pulmonary affections, and one to Marasmus,- There were none due to Zymotic diseases, nor in any way the result of causes for which a Sanitary Authority can be considered in any way responsible.

The number of cases of Sickness from Zymotic diseases was only two at the Farm Steading of Northfield,

The deaths from Bronchial and Pulmonary affections inclusive of Tubercular diseases have been 13, This smaller mortality than is usual in ordinary years I attribute to the nonexistence during the greater part of the colder months of the year of the North and North-east winds, While there was an absence of cold winds the temperature was for several months very low and this in my opinion was the reason for the increased mortality from Cerebral apoplexy. 8 deaths having resulted from this cause, Four deaths were due to Heart disease, Cancer caused 4 deaths, There has been only one nuisance reported during the year viz, the insanitary condition of the house occupied by a patient labouring under consumption, Your Sanitary Inspector attended to this case, and had her by my directions removed to the Parochial Lodging House in the village.

As last year I think it well to tabulate the number of births and deaths which occurred during the different months in the course of the year.

Births

Births,				Deaths,			
Month.	M.	F.	Total.	Month.	M.	F.	Total.
January	3	6	9	January	1	1	2
February	2	7	9	February	2	3	5
March	2	3	5	March	1	1	2
April	5	2	7	April	1	3	4
May	5	2	7	May	3	1	4
June	6	3	9	June	1	0	1
July	5	2	7	July	2	0	2
August	5	2	7	August	0	3	3
September	2	0	2	September	1	3	4
October	3	5	8	October	1	1	2
November	1	3	4	November	1	0	1
December,	3	4	7	December,	4	2	6
Total	42	39	81	Total	18	18	36

I shall now give a few details as to the health of the Community and the state of the weather for the various months of the year.

January. The year began with clear frosty weather. The frost continued with greater or less intensity during the entire month accompanied with heavy falls of Snow, the ground being covered to the depth of from five to seven inches. Winds veering from North east to South south east and increasing at times to the force of a hurricane, which caused considerable damage to property especially along the coast prevailed. During the first half of the month the health of the district continued very good. From the 20th till the end of the month cold, frosty boisterous weather is the record with North northeast winds and in the course of these days several cases of inflammation of the Lungs, Bronchitis, and Laryngeal affections in children occurred. In consequence of the long continuance of the Snow Storm a large number of the workingclass were

were out of employment,

February. There was a continuance of the same weather during the whole of this month as prevailed in January. Intense frost and heavy snowfalls which led to a complete interruption of out door labour, and seriously affected the very old and the young. Hence there were three deaths from apoplexy in persons advanced in life and an unusually large amount of Pulmonary affections in the young and also the adult population, Croupous Pneumonia evidently of an infectious nature affected three, four, five, and six members in six households, There was one death from Broncho-Pneumonia in an adult of 83 years of age, On the 23rd of the month an accident occurred at Reston, A young woman (Marshall) having had her leg wrenched off by a thrashing mill, She was removed to the Royal Infirmary where she died from Collapse after amputation at the hip joint, While a large amount of Sickness existed in the landward parts of the Parish during this cold and unhealthy month the village of St. Abbs continued throughout it to be exceptionally free from all forms of disease, One case of Lobar Pneumonia being the entire record, A case of Hemiplegia due to exposure occurred in a hind at Dowlaw on the 25th, A Circular dated 20th February was issued by the Local Government Board in obedience to a Communication received from the Chairman of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Distress from want of Employment requesting information on the following points:- (1) Whether there is any exceptional distress in the district and how far this is due to the Locality or to the Severe weather? Ans: There has been no actual distress as no one applied for

Parochial

Parochial relief, but the seventy one persons thrown out of employment throughout the Parish for 8, 10, and 12 weeks, must have subsisted mainly if not entirely on credit granted them by the Shopkeepers in the different villages", and this manifests a very laudable spirit of independence, "The distress, if any existed, was wholly due to the severe weather". The number out of employment in the villages of

Coldingham was	37
Reston	1
Auchencrow	15
Grantshouse	18
Total	71

(2) What is being done to meet the distress by Public Authorities or by Voluntary Agencies, and the average daily number relieved by each of the Agencies during the week ended 16th February?. Ans:- Nothing required.

(3) Is an unemployed register maintained, and with what result?- No".

The above was supplied to me by Mr. Crack, Inspector of Poor, to whom the circular was addressed and who promptly secured the required information.

March. March was ushered in with a fine mild springlike day, with the exception of slight frost during the night genial weather continued during the whole of the first week. Wet foggy weather with light Northerly winds characterised the second week. From this date until the 23rd. the weather was calm, mild, and dry. On the 24th a strong South west gale set in and continued with increasing intensity till the night of the 26th. From the 27th till the end of the month the weather was foggy with considerable falls of rain. The health of the community continued very good during

during the first half of the month, but during the week beginning with the 17th there was almost an epidemic visitation of Influenza as ten families comprising thirty five individuals became affected with it, and new seizures continued to come under my observation till the close of the month, I have reason to believe that Influenza was very widely spread throughout the parish during this period but as most of the cases were of a mild type they did not come to the knowledge of the Officer of Health, On the 29th I wrote Mr. McRae, Sanitary Inspector as to the overcrowding and insanitary condition generally of a house at Whitecross occupied by Mr. Patterson. The case was at once attended to and the very objectionable state of matters rectified,

April. The first half of this month was very wet with cold North-east winds, The middle of the month was characterised by mild, dry, Spring weather, while the last week there were heavy falls of rain, and dense fogs, Influenza continued to prevail during the entire month, many cases being severe and complicated with Pneumonia, In consequence of the prevalence of Influenza at St. Abbs the attendance at the School there fell from 101 to 44 and it was therefore deemed advisable to close the School,

May. May set in with cold Northeast winds but fine dry weather and till the 15th mild, clear weather with bright sunshine prevailed, On the night of the 15th there was a cold North east wind with showers of hail which was attended with a very considerable fall of temperature, The cold continued till the 20th of the month and during this time much vegetation was blighted, The health of the community was however not perceptibly affected thereby, A considerable number of cases of conjunctivitis occurred in children, and a few cases of measles the latter affection being imported from the

the district of Lauder where it was very prevalent. With the 31st there was a change to bright sunshine and genial weather with a clear cloudless sky continued till end of the month, Rain much needed.

June. South and South-west winds with mild, bright summer weather prevailed during the first two weeks of this month, The aspect of the Landscape - especially in those districts where whin and broom were abundant - was withered, ~~green~~ grim and cheerless, a striking evidence of the Severity of the winter, For miles scorched Shrubs alone met the eye which at this season were usually covered with a beautiful yellow bloom, From the 15th to 17th there were cold North-west winds with Showers of Snow which were accompanied in Some districts by from 12° to 17° of frost, Severe hail storms occurred in Some quarters of the parish, At Lumsdaine the hail was so large and fell with such force that over Several acres the turnip leaves were completely riddled by them, Notwithstanding these sudden transitions the health of the parish continued good. Towards the beginning of the month several cases of Varicella or chicken pox came under my notice and two or three cases of measles at Reston, The Crops promised well.

July. With this month a complete change of weather set in, Cold and wet with North-east winds, From the 7th to the 9th Strong South west winds prevailed but dry till the 17th of the month after which there were considerable falls of rain, The last week was very wet, specially so from the 26th when the rainfall may be spoken of as approaching to a flood, Traffic between Coldingham and Ayton was interrupted by the fall of a part of the newly built bridge at Aleswill in consequence of the heavy

heavy rains. The health continued very good throughout so that there is no record.

August, First week wet, cold, and unsettled with North-north-east winds, Several cases of Diarrhœa principally amongst Children, From the 15th. to 28th. dry, bright, Sunny weather, Diarrhœa very prevalent at St. Ives. The month closed with a week of good harvest weather with occasional light showers, and mild South-westerly winds,

September, September was throughout a model harvest month and operations in the field were carried on almost without any interruption, There were several very hot days in the course of the month, the thermometer registering as high as 78·3°, During the continuance of the high temperature there was a large number of cases of diarrhœa in children, and a few cases of Choleraic diarrhœa in Adults, Two cases of febrile attacks in Children with a suspicious Scarlatina form emption occurred in the village but as I did not consider it sufficiently pronounced the cases were not reported, On the 20th. however a well marked case of Scarlet fever occurred at the Pleas, and there is every reason to suppose the child received the infection from the family in the village, Strict isolation was enforced and the disease did not Spread, In the beginning of the month a Communication was received from the Local Government Board anent Hospital accommodation for this district in the event of an outbreak of Cholera, A further circular was forwarded with opinion of Council as to the powers possessed by a Local Authority to enforce a proper Water Supply for any house within the district without such a Supply.

October, October was ushered in by a considerable fall of temperature, high cyclonic winds from North and North east.

Northeast and heavy falls of rain, which continued for six days. From this date till the 15th very fine. clear, mild, but bracing weather was characteristic, Some cases of inflammation of Lungs and two cases of Spasmodic Croup occurred in the early part of the month. The 16th & 17th were cold and wet with Northeast winds and considerable degree of frost at night, and till the end of the month the weather was very cold and variable, During this period a large number of inflammatory affections of chest occurred in adults and children and several chronic cases were aggravated by seizures of acute inflammation, The month ended with sleet, hail, and Snow. some degrees of frost, and strong Northeast winds,

November. The first day of the month was beautiful clear and mild, but with this exception the month was throughout dull, cold, and wet, and boisterous, there being a succession of South-westerly gales. On the 10th a strong South west gale almost approaching to hurricane force swept over the Country but strong as it was there was no destruction to property in this district, On the 15th there was a recurrence of the gales with very wet unsettled weather, From the 17th to 20th fine settled weather. - Cold dreary, wet, boisterous weather continued during the remainder of the month, but notwithstanding these changes the health continued good, there being no disease traceable to atmospheric influences. Diseases of the respiratory Organs being much below the average, the exception of children's ailments being noteworthy,

December. The first half of this month there was very unsettled weather on some days assuming a

a very wintry aspect, there was a considerable rainfall and three or four days of Severe frost, and blinding drifting Snow storms, there were also Strong North west and South West winds at times increasing to gales. A few Bronchial and Pulmonary affections occurred during this period, but there were no ailments amongst children requiring medical Attendance. On the 15th. I was called on to visit a young man at Northfield whom I found to be suffering from Typhoid or Enteric fever, On the 27th. a Second member of the same family at Northfield was seized with Typhoid fever, On the 17th. in Company with Mr. John McRae, Sanitary Inspector, I visited Northfield to ascertain if possible the probable cause of this fresh outbreak, After a very careful and thorough examination of the Sanitary arrangements of the Surroundings and consulting in regard to them we agreed to recommend that a properly constructed drain should be carried along the whole length of the Farm Servants cottages and four gratings, We also suggested that the roadway should be raised in the centre So as to admit of the water running off into the drain and not accumulate as at present opposite each door, I wrote Mr. Usher, Proprietor of Northfield, what we thought should be done and he immediately wrote me that the Suggestions proposed should be at once carried out, We are of opinion that when these improvements are executed all will be done it is possible to do by way of preventing a recurrence of these outbreaks of fever, Simple colds and febrile attacks of an Influenza type prevailed pretty generally towards the latter part of the month, One case of Whooping Cough occurred in the village of Coldingham which was clearly imported from Eyemouth where it presently exists as an Epidemic,

The

The Weather during the last half of the month was very variable.

Bakeries. The Bakeries in the Parish have been periodically visited and all of them have always been found to me in a very satisfactory condition,

Cowbyres. The Cowbyres have also been inspected and the Sanitary Arrangements in connection with them have to be favourably reported on.

Parochial Lodging House. The Poorhouse continues to be well managed, cleanly kept, and the inmates well attended to,

I have the honour to be Gentlemen, Your obedient Servant Lachn McDougall

Medical Officer of Health, Coldingham,

Coldingham
30th January 1896.